GEN. THOMAS SUMTER.

He Fought, Lived and Died on th High Hills of Santee.

A VERY INTERESTING SKETCH.

A Valuable Contribution to History--Facts About the Great Soldier Which Give an Insight to His Character.

While South Carolina has furnished more great men to this country than any other State in the sisterhood of States, except old Virginia, and while no other people have shown a higher appreciation of their great men in honoring them with offices of the highest trust and confidence than she has, it is equally true that no State has been more careless than she in recording the great deeds of her leading men. It is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, sins that the old State has been guilty of, for in it she has been untrue to herself in neglecting to let the world and future generations know of the self-sacrificing devotion of their Rutledges, Pinckneys, Calhouns, Sumters, Hamptons, Butlers and many other soldiers and statesmen unsurpassed for unselfish devotion to their country.

It has been said by a beautiful writer that "Universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is, at the bottom, the history of the great men who have worked here." "We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near." "No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man." And "no sadder proof can be given of his own littleness than disbelief in great men."

And, while South Carolina has shown the noble truthfulness of her nature several times in her history, by putting herself completely in the hands of one of her sons and obeying his commands more implicitly than the written law of the land, it is only necessary to name Rutledge, Calhoun and the greatest of all, old lion-like Hampton, to prove the truth of this. It is equally and sadly true that in the pages of the popular histories of the day they are unknown in comparison with others who, when we come to find out what they did, are not worthy of being named on the same page with those named above.

THOMAS SUMTER, OF STATESBURG, PLANTER.

When the Revolutionary war commenced in 1776, one of these, to whom we always turn when danger approaches, was living here, near Statesburg, leading the quiet, genial life of a planter, the life from which almost every one of the truly great men of this country sprung. This country gentleman was Thomas Sumter, then about 44 years of age.

He came from the same sort of stock from which Hampton and R. H. Anderson came, and from all that we know of him he was very much the same sort of man: one who always attended strictly to his own business and never allowed any interference with it by anyone else, and who always wished to keep the peace, but when called upon to fight for a just cause, fought regardless of any consequences to himself or of future reward or glory.

The countrymen of such men have accepted the measurement that their own proud silence and modesty have placed upon themselves and have either ascribed their heroic deeds to others or buried them in oblivion.

The people of to-day in Gen. Sumter's old home, the descendants of his friends and neighbors, know more of the deeds of Richard Cœur de Lion in Palestine, than they do of Gen. Sumter's.

The two best and most widely known things about him are that his grave is unmarked even by a headstone, and that Fort Sumter was named after him.

Gen. Sumter seems to people living to-day like some hero of romance; just enough is known of him to make people at all interested in the history of their country long to know more.

It is pretty well known that he came to this State from Virginia, and it is thought that he first came here as a soldier with the troops sent here by Virginia to help South Carolina in an Indian war some years before the Revolution. He was afterwards sent to this State on a mission to the Cherokee Indians by the Governor of Virginia, in company with two men named Timberlake and Graham.

They found that there was a French emissary among the Indians working against the commissioners from Virginia. These latter, therefore, kidnapped the Frenchman, carried him to Charleston and put him on board of a vessel sailing to England.

The vessel was lost and the meddling Frenchman was never heard of again.

SERVED UNDER BRADDOCK IN VIRGINIA.

Before moving to South Carolina Gen. Sumter had held a commission in the Virginia militia and had taken part in Braddock's raid among the Indians and his disastrous defeat.

He first settled in South Carolina on a plantation on the Santee River, in what is now Clarendon county. While there he married a widow, Mrs. Jamison, who had been Miss Cantey, one of that well known family which has furnished to their State so many gentlemen in times of peace and so many gallant soldiers in times of war.

In passing back and forth between South Carolina and Virginia Gen. Sumter passed over the high hills of Santee, called by the early French settlers de Sante, on account of its healthfulness, the Sante being afterwards changed by its English occupants into Santee, and a few years before the Revolution he bought a plantation and moved up here and lived on the place now known as "The Ruins," on an opposite hill to and about a half mile from Statesburg postoffice, or as it has always been called, "The Borough."

There was a tavern and a few stores in "The Borough" then, but the principal house stood, as it now stands, on the top of the hill and was owned then by Mr. Hooper, who, it is said, was a Tory, as a great many gentlemen were, and whose wisdom and foresight have often been highly commended in the last thirty years in the South by descendants of the "patriots" of 1776.

It is also said that Lord Cornwallis several times made his headquarters in this house and there is a very large oak tree standing in the yard on which he hung an American spy.

BIRTHPLACE OF GEN. ANDERSON.

The place is now owned by Dr. W. W. Anderson, Sr., and was the birthplace of his distinguished brother, "Fighting Dick" Anderson, a lieutenant general in the Confederate army.

When Gen. Sumter moved up here from Santee the neighborhood was settled by planters, gentlemen, with large tracts of land and numbers of slaves, who lived on their high hills of health in perfect satisfaction with themselves and their surroundings.

Most of them have passed away even in name from the land they loved so well, the only record of them now left being in the records of the Episcopal Church kept here.

The war of 1776 must have been a rude shock to these gentlemen, separating them, as it did, in their friendly relations towards each other.

As soon as it commenced Gen. Sumter took a part, and I have been told commanded a regiment, which was stationed on the coast, somewhere near Georgetown, when the battle of Fort Moultrie was fought, but his hardest work came later in the war when the British came back to South Carolina in 1780.

Gen. Green and the author of his life find a great deal of fault with Gen. Sumter for insubordination, and lay the want of success in one or two expeditions to him, and I do not believe that they have ever been publicly denied, but I have heard that they could be if his private letters at the time were published.

The same author also says that Gen. Sumter used to take forcibly the negro slaves of the Tories and pay his men with them, and that his men then lost a great deal of time going off to carry their negroes to places of safety, and says that there was a good deal of complaint by the Whigs of this conduct, as it caused the British to retaliate by seizing their negroes.

All of this may be true of Gen. Sumter, but there are some things to show what sort of work he did even if no one has ever written his life, and one is that he was given a name by those best able to know and appreciate his fighting qualities. His soldiers called him "The Game Cock," and no better evidence could be given of his courage and the love of his soldiers for him, for men engaged in the stern realities of war never give a man false or misleading titles; whatever they call their leader he can be absolutely known to be.

THREE HISTORIC SWORDS.

The other fact is that his grandson, Mr. Sebastian Sumter, has now in his possession two swords taken by Gen. Sumter from two British officers whom he captured, Major Wemyss and Major Fraser. These swords are tongues of steel, telling in silence of Gen. Sumter's skill and courage and contradicting any little spiteful slings that the General never condescended to notice by a denial. His own sword, too, speaks volumes; no small man in any sense ever wielded it; none but a plain, strong man who meant business and to whom war meant fight in its strongest sense. It is long and heavy, with a keen point and edge, and to look at it any one can imagine English blood spouting beneath its fierce strokes, and making redder the red coat of many a British soldier and helping to win for its owner the right to mind his own business without outside interference, all that he and his people have ever asked.

Gen. Sumter left the army before peace was declared, but after all of the serious fighting was over and when it was very plain that the cause for which he had fought would triumph.

We are told by Johnson, in the life of Gen. Green, that Gen. Sumter left the army because he thought himself badly treated by Gen. Green, but it is more natural to suppose from what we know of Gen. Sumter that he did not care to stay in the army when the reason for joining it was practically over, and for that reason he left it.

HIS HOME BURNED BY THE BRITISH.

One day during the war the General was at home on a visit to his family, and, expecting to be engaged in some domestic occupation, he told his little son, Tom, then 8 or 10 years old, to get his horse and ride down the road and see if he could hear of any of the enemy being in the neighborhood, as he did not wish to by surprised and perhaps captured be them. Tom rode off towards where the thrifty little hamlet of Wedgefield now stands. After going some miles he was told by a man whom he met that Col. Campbell, in command of some of Tarleton's troopers, was a few miles further down the road and rapidly advancing. Hurrying home, Tom told his father, who mounted his horse and left, his son accompanying him for a short distance.

Later in the day little Tom was sitting on his horse in front of the old tavern, talking to someone sitting in the piazza, when happening to look up the road he saw coming towards him a body of cavalry in red coats. He dashed off down the road and was pursued for a short distance by the soldiers, but when he reached what was known as the Moss House, and which still stands, he turned off to the right and rode off through the woods and over the hills, and safely reached his father's house, the soldiers stopping at Mr. Moss's house.

The old tavern mentioned above stood there until burned down by Potter's raiders, in April 1865.

When little Tom Sumter reached home he found that Col. Campbell had been there with some of Tarleton's men and burned the house and destroyed everything that they could not carry off. His mother was a cripple and confined to a large chair, and she had been picked up and carried off some distance from the house, where she had witnessed what many a Southern wife and mother witnessed a little more than eighty years afterwards with the same indomitable spirit, the destruction of her absent soldier husband's home and hearthstone in the vain effort by a ruthless soldiery to crush the spirit of those who could not be conquered on the battlefield.

But she belonged to the some old South Carolina stock that the Confederate women did, and amid the ashes of her dearly cherished home only learned to love South Carolina all the more and thought her so much the more needful of her husband's best and bravest efforts, and she simply moved to another place, owned by Gen. Sumter, which was afterwards named the Home House. She lived there until her death, and she and Gen. Sumter were both buried there, and their grandson lives there now. Even among Tarleton's men, as among Sherman's and Potter's, some were found with manly feelings of compassion towards women and children whose houses were being burned and their sustenance destroyed, and one of them seized a moment when unseen by his Comrades to go by Mrs. Sumter and slip a ham under her chair, where it was hidden by her skirts. An incident occurred that day which went to show how the English soldiers made enemies for their King, instead of holding the people as his subjects, by their overbearing conduct. There was a white carpenter working in the yard for Gen. Sumter, whom the General had often tried to induce to join the army, but he never could, and some of the British soldiers that day used him very roughly, and in the struggle with them he struck one of them and hurt him severely with his chisel, and then managed to break away from them and escape. He immediately joined Gen. Sumter's command and made a faithful soldier to the end of the war, doubtless one of many such enemies to British rule in South Carolina. Young Thomas Sumter told all of this to his children many years afterwards.

POTTER AND TARLETON.

During the late civil war a young Confederate soldier happened to be at home on a furlough when Potter's army came through this section of country, and riding along one day by himself was chased from almost the same spot as young Sumter was, and down the old Borough hill, by a body of soldiers in blue, but also managed to escape them.

When the war was over Gen. Sumter represented his county in the Legislature and his State in Congress, but made no especial record either as a statesman or a politician. He seems to have been a man plain and simple in his tastes, and who liked to stay at home, and very blunt and direct in the expression of his opinions, but very kind-hearted and generous.

GEN. SUMTER'S LIEN SYSTEM.

When he lived at Sumter's Mount there were a good many poor people living around him, to whom he would advance provisions all of the year, and at the end of the year, thinking it would seem unbusiness-like to give them the things, would take his wagon and go around and collect pay from them in corn, peas, etc., and at the beginning of the next year his sympathies would be aroused, and he would immediately give them all out again; that was his way of giving liens.

He owned a great deal of land, and settled a good many plantations, and if there was anything of a stream on any of his places he always built a dam across it and had a pond and a mill. He evidently thought grist and flour mills very valuable property, as anyone can see now who visits any of the places ever owned by him by the old mill dams still standing as ineffaceable monuments to his industry and faith in mills.

At the first meeting of the congregation of the Episcopal Church at this place after the Revolution Gen. Sumter was elected one of the vestrymen, and for years afterwards served the church in that capacity.

Some of the vestrymen had been Tories during the war just ended, and I have heard a story from an old man of the General's having made his men take one of them from home and carry him a prisoner to his camp, but there is no evidence in the church records of hard feelings on account of past differences of opinion.

THE CHURCH BOOK TELLS NO TALES.

Doubtless the General had paid his men with some of his neighbors' slaves, too; it was a way he was said to have had, but nothing was ever said of this in the church book.

There was no church building here at that time, for at a "meeting held at Statesburg July 23d, 1788, the following action was taken: The Rev. Mr. Tate was appointed minister for ten months, with the allowance of a salary of one hundred pounds sterling, and recommended that he hold divine services on Sundays in Mr. Powell's long room until a more suitable place of worship can be fixed upon and a proper house for that purpose be erected," which was done a few years afterwards.

Gen. Sumter lived at "The Home House" until 1821, when his son, Col. Thos. Sumter, came home from Brazil where he had been United States consul for years, when the old gentleman gave up the place to him and moved up to a high hill called Sumter's Mount, about fifteen miles from the Borough, and persisted in living here by himself, his wife having died, except for the servants he had around him, until his death in 1832 at 98 years.

ACTIVE TO THE DAY OF HIS DEATH.

He led an active life up to the day of his death, and his horse was hitched, saddled and bridled at the door for him to take his accustomed ride to his fields after breakfast. On that fatal day one of his servants went in to see the cause of his not coming as usual, and found him in his large arm-chair apparently asleep, but found upon examination that his brave spirit had gone to its last long rest. Only a few months before his death he had ridden on horseback from Sumter's Mount to the Borough, a distance of fifteen miles, and back in one day.

The family have an engraving of him taken the year before his death in his 98th year.

He left a name honored and loved by his neighbors, not because of his public services, but because of the kindness of his heart and the generosity and manliness of his disposition, which made him treat all whom he thought worthy of his respect with equal politeness, and the poorest man in the country was just as welcome to his hand and a seat at his table as the President of the United States would have been.

It is but just to say that this is still a distinguishing trait of his family. No gold braid, glittering wealth or high-sounding titles raised the man in his estimation any more than poverty, rags and obscurity lowered another.

I have heard older people say that this was the principal cause of his great popularity, and it descended to his children and grandchildren, and for years there was no office in the gift of the people of Sumter county that one of them could not have filled if they had chosen to take it.

I also heard an old gentleman say, not long ago, that, when a boy, he attended a Magistrate's Court at which it was necessary to determine whether a certain man was of pure white blood or not, and that as the man had served in Gen. Sumter's command and who knew him well, it was decided to abide by his decision, and he was sent for and requested to attend.

While Gen. Sumter and all present were talking the man in question walked in, and Gen. Sumter immediately jumped up, shook hands with him and offered him a chair. This settled the question, and nothing was said about the man's color, as all knew that if he had not been known by the General to be a white man he would not have received him as he did.

What a life Gen. Sumter had led and what a tremendous work he had taken a man's part in. He may be said to have been born before the twilight of the dark ages had passed away, and to have lived until the bright twilight of the wonderful nineteenth century civilization was passing away into the glorious light of the day of railroads and electricity.

He was a man of middle age when Napoleon Bonaparte was born, and lived for nine years after Napoleon was dead and buried.

When a young man he helped to drive away Indians almost from the doorsteps of himself and his neighbors, and lived to see the incipiency of that internecine struggle which eventually robbed his beloved State of the sacred right of sisterhood for which he had spent so many years of his life. Is not the record of such a life well worth the writing?

The life of an honest man, bravely striving against any odds for the betterment of the human race, is always an ennobling history and a much needed relaxation to the country from the everlasting effort to be "progressive," and to "make money," which is resounding in all ears, all the time in screeching tones, from every side. Think what a man he would have appeared to all the world if he had chanced to go to New England instead of coming to South Carolina. May some one well able to do it take this brief and hasty sketch as a hint to do justice to Gen. Sumter's memory.

W. J. R.

Stateburg, June 24, 1898.

—Sunday News.

KILLING OF THE SUBSIDY BILL.

Impossible to Secure a Vote at This Session

Washington, Feb 15—That the opposition to the shipping bill in the senate will not permit a vote to be taken on the measure at the present session was made clear during the closing hours of today session For several days it has been evident that it would be difficult to gain unanimous consent to take a vote upon the measure, but not until late today was the frank assertion made that a vote could not be had.

At the conclusion of several hours' consideration of the bill, Mr Teller, of Colorado, announced his purpose to prevent a vote at this session In an impassioned speech he declared that he would not consent to any agreement to vote and that it must be evident to the advocates of the bill that no vote could be had

The statement by the Colorado senator elicited a sharp response from Mr Aldrich, of Rhode Island, who insisted that despite the declaration of Mr Teller the business of the senate would be proceeded with in accordance with the wishes of the majority Mr Teller's statement also drew the fire of Mr Chandler, of New Hampshire, who asserted that the position of the opposition was preposterous Mr Hanna, of Ohio, replied to Mr Teller in a forceful speech, in the course of which he became impassioned in the denunciation of the methods employed by the opposition to defeat the measure The advocates of the bill, he said, were honestly endeavoring to advance the best interests of the country and he resented the insinuations against their honesty of purpose

Raise Them at Home.

Prof Wiley, chief chemist of the national agricultural department, in a late lecture on food impurities and adulterations, said he had found sufficient salts of copper, a rank poison, in a can of "green peas" to coat, or plate, a pocket knife! The verdigris was put into the can to make the green of the peas more vivid, add to their attractiveness and so make them sell People in South Carolina had better eat peas of their own canning, and can more of them.—News and Courier

New York, Feb 13 — Mrs Thomas C Platt, wife of United States senator Platt, died today at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, after a long illness of heart affection.

Dr Brown Talks Plainly.

In His Sermon Sunday Night He Handled Some Social Evils Without Gloves.

PAID HIS RESPECTS TO THE GAMBLERS.

Rev C. C Brown, D D, delivered a strong sermon at the Baptist Church Sunday night, Feb 11th. We give herewith a synopsis of the discourse, from which the introduction is omitted:

Belshazzar was feasting when he should have been looking out for the welfare of his city. A man may sometimes enjoy a feast, but not until the greater duties of life have been attended to The world is set too much on costly amusements that border upon dissipation. Destruction was facing the feaster, but he did not seem to be aware of the fact. The closing verses of this chapter say: "In that night was Belshazzar slain" To every man, death stands just without the gate, and, sooner or later, will get in his knock out blow Any manner of life is vicious which forbids a man from thinking about dying Samuel Johnson said: "Death is so much dreaded, that men spend their whole lives trying not to think about it."

Belshazzer feast was a profaning feast. He was not satisfied that he or his lords and concubines should drink from the ordinary cups of the palace, but sent and brought the vessels once used in the holy service of the temple at Jerusalem. It is easy to learn to profane holy things. I have read of drunken revellers who, to carry out their blasphemy, sought to celebrate in mockery the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Belshazzar had at his feast the three elements that commonly combine to make the thing complete—men, women and wine From that day to this, the feasts have remained the same, and men and women, under such circumstances, will be guilty of deeds that would bring a blush to their faces in calmer and more thoughtful moments The testimony of physicians is that, in the so-called higher orders of society, the drink habit is on the increase. not only with the men, but with the women I myself have seen a woman carried through the streets in a buggy, as if she were sick; but upon inquiring, I found that she was drunk, and had been picked up from the ball room floor.

God writes upon the wall for every man, in some sort of way In times of hilarity, men pretend not to see the writing, or they refuse to read it, but God continues to write, just the same The warning can be despised or not, just as we see fit. God writes some things which any one can interpret; others can only be read by the help of the Holy Spirit Gray hairs interpret themselves, and tell of the coming end, as do also stiffened limbs and weakened physical energies The debauchee who is compelled to drink freely in the morning before he has power to dress himself, is but a poor fool if he cannot discern the meaning of his condition. When one finds that playing cards has become a passion, he needs no one to interpret his case. Excepting the use of morphine, no habit takes so strong a hold upon a man as gambling First, it is done for pleasure, then for profit, and finally simply to gratify an inordinate desire which one cannot refuse A case is on record of gamblers, who, having heard that one of their number was dead on the street below, began at once to bet among themselves as to whether he was really dead. Gambling is of ancient origin, and began with the ownership of property. By whatever name it be called, whether betting, wagering, lottery, crap shooting progressive euchre or dealing in futures, it is one and the same thing The game played in the parlor or in the social circle, anywhere for gain or for a prize, is just as bad as that played in a bed room on Main street or in the old Brunson house a little lower down the street There is the same element of risk in one as in the other, and an attempt to get something for nothing Hence gambling—the attempt to get something for nothing—is a violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal" President Dwight told the exact truth when he said, "There are but two possible methods by which we can acquire from others honestly—namely, either by free gift, or by rendering an equivalent for what we receive." I do not believe this statement can be controverted by any fair minded man. Yet, that which is obtained gambling is obtained by neither one of these methods The gambler does not intend to give an equivalent for what he receives

There is a fascination about gambling which grows upon one the more he indulges in it, and its effects are demoralizing and damning. It debases the intellect, corrupts the morals, and ruins the soul. The finished gambler has no heart; he would play at his mother's funeral, says Dr Knott. The crowning outrage of the crucifixion of the Son of God was that a small company of gamblers cast lots for his garment, which was all that he possessed

But God is writing everywhere, and the man who loses his business and sees his friends drop away from him because of his evil habits and vicious life, need not declare that he cannot interpret the writing He knows what the message means, but will not acknowledge it, until perchance it is too late.

All over the world God is writing on the walls—in the religious advantages given us, in the death of friends, in the inward yearnings of the heart.

The sermon ended with the story of a drunken youth, who, when a letter was handed to him from his mother, exclaimed, "Great God! Keep it till morning"

NEAR ABOUT PERFECT.

"The dispensary with some modifications to perfect the system, is the best solution of the liquor traffic" This is the stereotyped expression of the legislative candidate with dispensary leanings. It is interesting to note the amendments made by the legislature and the rules adopted by the state board "to perfect the system" At first there were several restrictive features, the most important of which were ignored from the beginning One after another has been added to the obsolete restrictions till the system is now near about "perfect" The process is about this: The state board gets a hint that a certain requirement is not acceptable to the patrons of the dispensary, or in some way limits the sales The state board winks back at the dispensers, and that requirement is disregarded afterward. If there is any protest raised, the next time the legislature works the law over, the distasteful requirement drops out

Some little question has been raised recently about not requiring the signed requests by purchasers, as the law directs Now an amendment is before the legislature to abolish this requirement altogether Of course it will pass. It is necessary "to perfect the system;" to please the patrons to increase the sales—and the revenue Of course it will pass. The people that are running the dispensary believe in the utmost latitude in the traffic Those who have been hoodwinked with the delusion that the dispensary is a temperance measure can do nothing even if they should protest, but they are not likely to raise their voice against fate, and it is very probable that they will be shown that the restriction is a dead letter and therefore would better be stricken out The system is nearly "perfect" now —Chester Lantern

McKinley and Roosevelt.

Washington, Feb. 13—President Pro Tem of the Senate Frye this afternoon declared William McKinley elected President and Theodore Roosevelt Vice President of the United States, and dissolved the joint meeting of the House and the Senate, called for that purpose

The ceremony took place in the House of Representatives in joint session The method of counting the vote is prescribed in great detail by the statute and was followed literally today Great crowds thronged the galleries to witess the interesting spectacle

The War in South Africa

Cape Town, February 13—Piet DeWet, who arrived in Cape Town yesterday to engage the Afrikanders in the peace movement, has an appointment for Friday or Saturday with Mr Thereon, President of the Afrikander Bund, who is coming here for the special purpose of discussing peace possibilities Mr De Wet, on behalf of the Boer peace committee, desires the Afrikander Bund to announce clearly that the invaders can expect no aid from the Cape Dutch, and then to send a deputation to Mr. Steyn and Gen DeWet to endeavor to prevail upon them to surrender He says he is confident Commandant Gen Louis Botha will surrender if Steyn and DeWet would do so, and the surrender will be practically without conditions

Durban, Natal, February 13—The Boer losses, when they were attacked by Gen. French are said to have been forty men killed and two hundred made prisoners

Cape Town, February 13—Another death from bubonic plague occurred today and two fresh cases are officially reported

Mrs Nation Hits Chicago.

Chicago, Feb 12—Mrs Carrie Nation arrived in Chicago tonight and later faced a somewhat diminutive audience gathered under the auspices of local members of the W. C. T. U., in Willard's hall. On her trip toward Chicago she made a number of short adresses from the rear end of the car speaking at nearly every station where a stop was made. Only a very small crowd was at the depot and it was for the most part composed of members of the reception committee.

Mrs Nation said that it was her intention to get the saloon keepers of Chicago together and talk to them.

Tampa, Feb 13—Between 300 and 400 employes of the Sanchez and Haya cigar factory went on strike this morning They demand the payment of $10 each for the time they claim was lost waiting for material The house refused this. Other demands will be made on the managers.